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ABSTRACT

A description of the counselor's role and identity is presented prior to the identification and discussion of 18 issues which can be raised in relation to the effectiveness of the counseling profession. The issues are representative of what many counselors feel to be most important and include provision of quality counselor education and training; quality laboratory practicum and internship experiences as an integral part of counselor education; developing greater understanding and empathy for clients different than the counselor; gaining and updating knowledge about the world of work; concern with consumer demand for greater knowledge and effective use of resources; keeping abreast of new trends in education and in women's changing roles, goals, and career patterns; keeping up-to-date in new counseling techniques; improving the profession's image; establishing goals for the year 2000; realistic manpower forecasting, and dissemination of occupational information and career placement; increasing responsibility to parents, to themselves; ethics and professional accountability; use of paraprofessionals; and greater active involvement in social action, legislation, and community activities by counselors. The American Personnel and Guidance Association is urged to do more for its members and questions are raised about its role. (TA)

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CRITICAL ISSUES IN CAREER GUIDANCE

S. Norman Feingold*

The counseling profession faces many challenges and obstacles. Counselors who believe all is okay, or that a modest amount of public relations will readily change the public opinion picture, are living a fantasy that carries with it the parameters of self-defeating behavior.

Many school counselors' jobs and careers have been terminated recently in cities such as Baltimore, St. Louis, Los Angeles, and Chicago, as well as in other parts of the country. Unfortunately, as a commodity, counseling does not have the high priority or image that those of us in the profession believe it does or should. Regardless what we as counselors think, a critical criterion for determining our viability is public opinion. The cost/benefit ratio of counseling to taxpayers and counselees versus competing demands for dollars is also a critical factor. Counselors must communicate their roles to the pubiic. Past performance is no guarantee of present acceptance. The professional association representing a discipline such as ours, thus, is more important than most people realize. Through examination of the following questions we can more readily identify those issues confronting and challenging us today.

DO COUNSELORS FACE AN IDENTITY CRISIS?

Do we, as counselors, know who we are, whom we serve, why, where, how, and when?

Who Are Counselors? Counselors are individuals trained in the helping professions, usually the behavioral sciences, who try to maximize assets and minimize limitations of the counselees they serve. Although they work in a variety of settings, for the most part, counselors stress the importance of the individual, the dignity of work and the importance of each person's contributions to himself, his family and society. During the last five to ten years there has been accelerated growth of counselors from varied economic and ethnic backgrounds. However, nationwide, the majority of counselors appear to come from white, middle-class backgrounds.

Whom Do Counselors Serve? Counselors serve a cross-section of this country's diverse population. Ethnicity, sex, religion, age, economic status, physical, emotional or

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intellectual level of functioning have no bearing on eligibility to obtain counseling services. This does not negate the fact, however, that individual counselors may work in a specialized setting, or with a concentrated sector of the population.

Why Are We Counselors? The literature is replete with references on the determinants of career choice. The works of Roe, Sussman, Ginsburg, Tiedeman and Super are but a few of the references to which one may refer for further explanation.

Where Does Counseling Occur? Counseling services to greater or lesser extents are offered in pre-school facilities; schools (public and private): elementary, junior high school, middle school, senior high school, trade and vocational schools, colleges; prisons and courts; employment services; business; rehabilitation centers and old age homes; hospitals and community health centers; mental health facilities, including specialized addiction treatment centers; free non-establishment clinics; clients' homes; and public and private agencies.

How Do Counselors Serve? Counselors serve as change agents by utilization of verbal and non-verbal communication. In their professional capacity, counselors are called upon to deal with many and complex human emotions, to alter environmental factors, to help in decision-making, etc. Counselors make field visits, refer clients to appropriate individuals or agencies that provide needed professional services, utilize community resources, and support their counselees in psychological, sociological and economic adjustments.

When Do Counselors Provide Counseling? Counseling is provided any time it is needed, primarily because those asking for guidance have problems coping with some aspect of their environment. Counselors do "their thing" in crisis counseling, developmental counseling, preventive counseling, outreach counseling, behavior modification and so forth. All too often, many of us who specialize in one area of counseling forget the other areas in which counselors function. We must not forget.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF COUNSELORS IN ORDER TO SATISFACTORILY FULFILL THEIR ROLES? WHAT ISSUES DOES THIS RAISE?

The following issues are but a few which can be raised in relation to the counseling profession. However, they are representative of the issues many counselors feel to be of most importance to them.

1. Provision of quality counselor education and training.

Present modes of counselor education in more than a few institutions do not adequately prepare students for the interpersonal aspects of the counseling relationship. The elements of effectively relating to clients and empathy need further reinforcement. Too often, counselors feel their training has not prepared them to meet significant demands of the work setting.

Do we need accreditation of counselor education programs? Is it possible, feasible, practical? More counselor educators should be required to account professionally for their training activities. Students often report that much course content is irrelevant and outdated by the time they enter counseling jobs. Perhaps counselor educators should be required to work with a case load either on a full-time basis every third or fourth year, or regularly, on a part-time basis. Or, possibly more full-time counselors should teach and supervise interns. Not only do students need practicums and internships, but counselor educators need "refresher" internships as well.

High scores on the Graduate Record Examination or Miller Analogies do not necessarily predict good counselor potential. To hazard a guess, there may possibly be an inverse relationship between high scores on these tests and the warmth and empathy requisite for an effective counseling relationship. Experimental

procedures, statistical analyses or theoretical concepts may be impassable barriers to a student's academic success. Yet, this does not mean he will be incapable of making a contribution to guidance by way of his valid perceptions and positive interactions with people.

Selection and methods of educating prospective counselors need further, extensive research and redevelopment. Many employers of counselors in various work settings are concerned about newly trained counselors and their lack of skills. Robert Stripling's report to the APGA Board of Governors (July 12, 1973) on standards for the preparation of counselors and other placement service personnel is a tremendous stride in the right direction. Further study, development and implementation are necessary if the counseling profession is to provide quality services to its clientele.

2. Quality laboratory practicum and internship experiences should be an integral part of counselor education.

Counselors in every work setting need to be more experienced in the world of work. Practicum training or internship experiences should have a wider scope and commence early in the training process. This provides the student greater opportunity to gain intensified on-the-job training. It would also serve as a worthwhile screening device to weed out those whose abilities and temperament are not suitable for the counseling profession. Studies indicate that counselors may have the intellectual ability for academic success but, for diverse reasons, the actual work may not be to their liking or relevant to their life styles.

Universities need to take a closer look at supervision provided to students in practicum training. Supervisory concepts and administrative procedures need to be closely scrutinized. The practicum experience must fully prepare counselors to meet their client's needs. Perhaps as incentive agencies providing such training should receive a stipend from the university in the form of tuition-free course work for their own employees. Exchange of ideas and techniques by interns in many work settings, including the school, should be at a maximum.

3. Developing greater understanding and empathy for clients who are different than the counselor.

Many counselors come from middle-class backgrounds, and as such cannot always be sufficiently sensitive to the lifestyles, attitudes, and problems of that part of their client population which comes from backgrounds unlike their own. An understanding of these factors is essential if the counseling relationship and process are to be effective. Course work and well-supervised experience can serve to lessen the "communication gap" that now exists between counselor and counselee.

The work experience of far too many counselors has been narrowly confined to teaching or other types of professional work. On-the-job training of all kinds should be considered to help bring about a better understanding of their clients' lifestyles. For example, the counselor who is to work with the non-college bound should gain experience in blue collar work.

Counselors in training should have more supervised practicum and internship experiences in a variety of work settings—factories, mines, wherever people work. Those who intend to work with the disadvantaged might well serve a year in an ACTION program as part of their practicum requirements. A similar type of practicum is needed for those who intend to work with the affluent. Training will also have to help counselors, both male and female, sort out their feelings and adapt to the many changes taking place in the world of work, including the efforts of the Women's Liberation movement.

4. Gaining and updating knowledge about the world of work.

The wrath of both counselee and the general public is incurred when counselors cannot provide accurate information about the world of work. Some counselors don't keep up with recent developments.

School counselors know a great deal about colleges. Ask them about the length of carpentry apprenticeships, training requirements for electricians, however, and you'll find that not more than a few counselors can readily supply the answers. Far too many counselors are discovering that their working knowledge of the more than 30,000 existing jobs is meagre. Practicing counselors and counselor educators need continuing experiences in the world of work. It might also be helpful if they read newspapers such as the *Wall Street Journal*, or via personal experiences, update their knowledge about current industrial practices and developments.

Many counselors need to be cognizant of the world of work from both a global and local point of view. Labor force trends, career training and job opportunities in their own area are of particular significance. There are some encouraging growing signs. More than 125,000 business and industry leaders throughout the U.S. are volunteering their services on some 20,000 advisory committees established by secondary and post-secondary schools to assist in the development of vocational and Federal educational programs. More interaction with business and union leadership, however, is required.

5. Concern with consumer demand for greater knowledge and effective use of resources.

One can markedly decrease the options of one's counselees by not updating their occupational and career information, accompanying resources and training possibilities. Counselors need to use resources other than their own skills. If this parameter is lacking, the counselor may be too circumscribed to meet the broad issues of what options are in reality available to his counselees.

Counselors are now spending more of their professional time out of the counseling office than in the past. This implies that counseling can be effected at many times in many places. Each counselee is a many-faceted individual. There may be a wide variety of programs and facilities other than the specific setting in which the counseling relationship occurs.

An effective counselor is more aware of new developments occurring in the classroom, the home, the community, and the world of work. One weakness evidenced by counselors is a lack of expertise in appropriate use of community resources. Research of the literature points up that some counselors are not even cognizant of what is available in their own area or how to use these resources effectively. Counselors need to know about local resources, vocational information and the location of referral centers where resources may be obtained.

6. Keeping abreast of new trends in education.

It is essential for counselors to keep up-to-date with the increasing number of alternatives to traditional secondary and post-secondary education. Most counselors who advise college or college-bound youth know a great deal about traditional colleges and universities. They also have more than a passing acquaintance with some admissions personnel, college administrators and faculty. New developments have taken place, however, which require counselors to update their information.

Some of these include:

- Correspondence courses at elementary, high school, vocational, technical and college levels.
- Advancement based on demonstrated knowledge and skill rather than course enrollment and the passage of time.
- Early admission to college.
- Advanced placement.
- College credit and degrees by examination.
- Elimination of grades based on tests.
- Credit for independent study.
- Home study for college credit.

- Flexibility to intersperse academic work with travel, employment and national service.
- Increased opportunity for students to design their own majors and curriculum.
- Flexibility of transfer requirements between various types of institutions.
- Concentrated academic programs for students studying to become lawyers, physicians, or other professionals whose services are in demand.

Counselors must be aware of programs such as University Without Walls, new educational programs offered by the Armed Forces, home study, new learning modules, external degrees, free schools and other educational resources that have only recently come into being. A large number of schools now exist where students can create their own curriculum and design their own major area of study. Career information and educational developments are changing so rapidly that counselors can quickly become obsolete unless they continuously keep informed. For example, how many counselors are aware that a young man may wish to become a doctor or lawyer, and enter West Point as a means of achieving these goals at no cost? This is only one illustration of places that once were not, except for a select few, even vaguely considered as an educational option.

Learning outside the school—the Paracurriculum—is one of the more interesting and least explored concepts. The paracurriculum concept recognizes that schooling provides only a part of the educational experience. Youngsters' non-school learning may, by far, be the most extensive factor in helping them cope with their environment.

Paracurriculum refers to out-of-school experiences which help to strengthen the intellectual ability, general background, and coping powers of the individual. Tomorrow's educational institutions and counselors must make greater and more deliberate use of the paracurriculum and the out-of-school milieu. The school would be a participatory planner and broker for non-school experiences. This would parallel the learner's in-school curriculum and sometimes temporarily or permanently replace it.

7. Keeping abreast of new trends in women's changing roles, goals and career patterns.

Increasing numbers of women are re-entering the labor market and combining three careers--wife, mother and careerist. Instead of waiting for their children to grow older, younger women are returning to work and school when their children are still in the early grades. According to a study by the National Opinion Research Center, more college-educated men are concerned about women fulfilling the role of wife, mother and careerist than their female counterparts. This return to work is not only based on financial need, but also on women's need for self-actualization and individuality. Counselors need to strongly support this issue and help stimulate research, demonstration, and pilot programs.

Women's Lib groups have brought to light the job and career issues of women today and the necessity for initiating accelerated changes in women's life styles. Women comprise almost 40% of the labor force, and yet only a small percentage are in professional, technical or managerial occupations. There is little question that the occupational distribution of women in higher level jobs and careers must be changed, particularly at the professional level. There is no rational explanation for the fact that in dentistry, medicine, engineering, etc., other countries have five or six times the percentage of women in these occupations than the U.S.

Counselors must demand and provide more adequate career information. Special emphasis should be placed on projecting new career opportunities for women. Most media, including printed literature, films and filmstrips, are presently geared heavily toward young men. Very little information is given pertaining to opportunities and career discontinuity challenges for women. Counselors must be prepared to help men and women face the hard realities of stereotyping and sexual discrimination. Before changes can be made, men must first be aware that there is discrimination, how change may be made, and ways in which they can feel comfortable with their changing roles resulting from a decrease of sex stereotyping and discrimination.

The counseling profession needs to be more cognizant of the realities and effective methods of overcoming sex discrimination. In addition, more opportunities should be provided for girls and women to visit various industries or see professional fields in which they are interested. Interaction with women who are successful in their respective fields is necessary for young women to gain a clear perspective of the world of work.

In addition, there is the question of changing roles, goals and career patterns for boys and men. In BBCCS programs, professional staff report that it is exceedingly difficult to find successful male career models in non-traditional male occupations. If women are changing their career patterns, men's career patterns may also have to undergo change. This is also an issue which is just beginning to surface. Counseling men, boys and their parents for changing roles and functions will be required as women's roles change.

8. Keeping up-to-date in new counseling techniques.

Another issue facing counselors is the importance of the individual counseling relationship and how extensive small group counseling should be. Some counselors believe that the one-to-one relationship is not economical and almost passe. From my own vantage point, individual counseling is here to stay. Neither group counseling nor group medicine can entirely meet the needs of our citizens. However, small group counseling may also be an exceedingly effective tool. Chances are that the individual may benefit from both individual and group techniques.

My experience has indicated that different skills are required for group counseling than for individual counseling. Counselors must be more fully trained in the skills of both in order to meet the needs of their clientele.

I am aware, as is most of the counseling profession, that we must extend our services to meet the needs of more people than we are now helping. We must not, however, be caught up in the numbers game lest we forget that there are no two people in this world of five billion who are exactly alike. Nevertheless, our success still appears to be minimal. We should try to move toward the use of more small group counseling. Its evaluation must be built into the research design. Each counselor educator must provide more sophisticated training in group counseling techniques. The potential is great, but the chance for tremendous error in small group counseling may be even greater than in the one-to-one relationship. Let us also remember that no agency will be approved by the International Association of Counseling Services if they offer group counseling alone.

Empathetic and warm counseling, no matter what technique is employed, can yield results. We must also review this problem in perspective.

9. Counselors must continually strive to improve the profession's image in the eyes of counselees and the general public.

Some youth register distrust toward counselors. Counselors are regarded as members of the establishment. Moreover, some counselors try to maintain the status quo. At times, they attempt to get young people to accept dead-end jobs or "make the best of a bad situation." We need to help counselees cope with their environment, maximize their options and reach appropriate decisions. Decisions should be made by the counselee; help in reaching a decision is the counselor's function. Counselors should be agents of change, not maintainers of existing conditions. We, as counselors, must adjust more adequately to change so that, in turn, we may be more innovative in our counseling relationships. Only by innovative methods and daring can we inspire youth and help them experience that for which so many are searching—self-actualization.

10. Establishing goals for the year 2000.

Where do we, as counselors and as psychologists, want to be in the year 2000? As a world futurist and charter member of the World Futurist Society, I am (perhaps unduly) concerned when I see colleagues in the physical sciences moving so rapidly ahead in scientific developments and achievements. In many instances, they have accomplished goals earlier than they predicted.

Biologists will soon be able to tell Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen that they can determine and choose the sex of their child. How far have we advanced in the field of genetic counseling if that is to be one of the parameters of counseling in the future?

We are nowhere near the new, creative discoveries that physical scientists are projecting. Is it that the helping professions are not attracting the most qualified people or that the social sciences are so much more complex? Counselors must be futurists if they are to meet challenges of the future. Plans must be initiated to reflect where the helping professions want to be by the year 2000. We, as agents of change, must define our own role, status and function. Like physical scientists, we must set goals for which our profession can strive.

11. Realistic manpower forecasting, and dissemination of occupational information and career placement.

Our manpower forecasting ability is improving. However, the picture is most uncertain because of constant technological change and acceleration. There was some question about funding recent revisions of the *OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK* because of difficulty in accurately forecasting labor market trends. Despite opposition, noticeable cuts were made in the budget. With the rapid technological changes taking place, it becomes increasingly important, and more difficult, for counselors to keep up. It is imperative that youth be deterred from making career choices too early in life. Moreover, people must be trained in broad vocational areas so as not to be too limited in what may be a disappearing field. Counselors should take on a more aggressive role in manpower and labor trend forecasting rather than leaving it all to economists.

The dissemination of occupational information is an extremely important counselor function. Less than 5% of career publications are reviewed by the Career Information Review Service of NVGA. There are plans to review a greater percentage in the future. In addition, there is little assessment of occupational information courses at the high school level. There are no clear-cut ways of determining the best methods of disseminating career information. Little is being done in the way of research and demonstration. The issue won't go away by overlooking it.

Counselors cannot be satisfied with helping a youngster make a "safe" decision about a job or education. Accurate career information must be provided in order for students to make appropriate career decisions. "Safe" decisions are not necessarily the right decisions.

12. Counselors should take increasing responsibility for meeting societal needs.

Alone, we cannot make the necessary changes. However, we can create an awareness. Along with the new dynamic roles of counselors go many unmet societal needs. There is great need for education and training of workers in fields which are grossly under-manned.

For example:

- Few nursing homes are staffed with social workers, vocational counselors, psychiatrists, foster parents and children, or full-time psychologists, specialists in recreation, art, music, etc.
- The growth of day care centers for the very young, the very old, and the recuperating stresses the need for more nurse-psychologists, counselors, business managers, and other male and

female generalists and specialists. These should not be glorified baby-sitting services, but places which are both secure and creative in which those who wish to, or must work, may leave their children, parents, or recovering ill.

- There is a need for paraprofessionals, aides, physical education teachers, social workers, educational and vocational counselors, and other specialist-educators to assist senior citizens both in special senior citizen housing and senior citizen communities. Geriatrics is a field of increasing importance and rapidly growing career opportunities. With 14% of our population now over 65, this is long overdue.
- Road signs all over the U.S. are impossible for many to read and understand. Agreement on standards for road signs in the United States still seems many decades away. There is a dire need for safety engineers, psychologists, semi-skilled and unskilled people to design and provide better signs and directional markers, safer highway systems, safer roads, and greater use of computers to direct traffic patterns.
- Other needs to be filled include greater emphasis on reform in prisons and correctional institutions. The likelihood of recidivism is high among inmates. Thus, we are not really rehabilitating these individuals. More sociologists, psychologists, vocational counselors, teacher aides, inmate aides are needed to ensure that our present system is truly rehabilitative.
- The roles of librarians and libraries should be changed to meet the increasing demands made upon them. Libraries need to be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A few libraries are already increasing their hours, but the vast majority are closed more than they are open. How can college libraries be used more effectively and innovatively as learning resource centers are open longer? What can counseling do now to provide input?
- In the future, education and training for unskilled to professional workers may be offered at a growing number of educational parks. New jobs and careers as well as the counselor's role in this area are well worth exploring.

13. <u>One of the pressing issues today is the relationship of white counselors to counselors of other races and ethnic groups.</u>

Some key Black counselors believe that only Blacks can adequately counsel their own race. Although there have been excellent APGA articles on racial and ethnic groups and their problems, communication still tends to be superficial and simplistic. Let's look at the record. At a recent APGA convention in Atlanta, there were approximately 500 people at an Association for Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance luncheon, only 5 of which were white. At a recent APGA convention in San Diego, a Chicano-sponsored social party attracted less than half a dozen whites. Why?

The big question, however, is what can we do about it? White counselors have much to learn from Black, Chicano, and American Indian counselors, and vice versa. Change will not take place by prosaic articles on the subject, but only by interaction with minorities and their environment. Local, national and professional contact with each other is necessary if we are to understand what is being said to one another. Perhaps an invitational conference of white counselors and those from other ethnic and racial groups may be able to set up working guidelines so that counselors can relate to each other more meaningfully. By knowing one another, we can better understand the problems each face. A conference of this type will, hopefully, be initiated with the Equalization of Opportunity Committee, National Vocational Guidance Association, National Association for Industrial and Educational Cooperation, and American Personnel and Guidance Association in the near future.

14. <u>Increased counselor responsibility to parents.</u>

Of great importance in counseling is the way in which parents are to be involved. There is tremendous demand by parents throughout the country for parent-effectiveness programs. In our society one seems to need training for just about everything except how to be a "professional" parent. Research by B'nai B'rith

Career and Counseling Services shows that counseling youth without involving parents is like working in a vacuum. On most occasions, one may obtain a large turnout at a meeting when the subject is parents and their relationship with their children. The ideas and principles with which today's parents were brought up and those of this generation, including their own children, are very much in variance. Many parents have never felt more perplexed.

Parents are also confronting change in child-rearing practices. Little girls must no longer play solely with dolls and other toys related to the domestic world of the "woman." It is no longer uncommon or abnormal for young girls to be seen vigorously swinging a baseball bat, using an erector set to build magnificent structures, or engaging in other masculine activities. Counselors must be actively involved in these new child-rearing concepts. They must be able to advise parents on the psychological effects of role reversals. Many parents accept the fact that "masculine" play activities do not change their daughters into men. However, many parents fear that their sons may be subject to scorn or may become homosexuals if they engage in "feminine activities." Sex stereotyping starts very early in our culture—it permeates each person's life style. Counselors have a responsibility to see that these false and misleading concepts are corrected.

15. Counselors also have a responsibility to themselves.

According to Hillel, the question, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me," expresses the pervading influence of self-concept. It also reflects the necessity for the profession to improve its image, not only for the public but also for itself.

A major problem facing any professional counseling association, and APGA is no exception, is that of certification and licensing. I recently received a letter from Dr. Richard R. Abidin, Jr., a member of the Virginia Board of Psychologists Examiners. Dr. Abidin was requested by the Board to obtain the opinions and ideas of various sources about the inclusion of vocational and guidance counselors under the Psychology Licensure Law, or the establishment of separate licensure for these professions. Judgments are necessary to determine functions, skills and training standards for vocational and/or guidance counselors who render their services to the public in private practice and without supervision.

APGA is reaching the point at which appropriate decisions must be made. For example, a Ph.D. in the District of Columbia with excellent, supervised experience conducting therapy will not be paid by Blue Cross or Blue Shield unless he or she is licensed by the District. This poses many sticky problems.

A further implication, as with other professions, is that a counselor may be licensed by one state and not by others. Licensure in one state does not mean reciprocity in another. The counselor who has legitimately practiced his profession for 25 to 30 years in the District of Columbia, for example, is unable to automatically practice in Florida, where he may wish to go for retirement.

The matter of licensing and certification is an issue that we all must review as professionals. We must work toward effecting standards of quality as well as licensing so that future generations of counselors will not be threatened by the legal impediments that presently confront counselors and psychologists.

The problems of counselors and psychologists are not the same, but there is enough professional congruity for each discipline to benefit from the other. Psychologists and counselors alike must meet the same high ethical and professional standards as those who wish to be engaged in private practice. Counselors should have a clear awareness of developments in this area, or they may find their leverage and much of their decision-making power taken out of their hands. Counselors cannot hide behind meaningless values of accreditation. We must be accountable to our consumers. We must demonstrate by our performance that we are making a difference in people's lives—that we are effectively helping them to cope with their environment.

16. Ethics and professional accountability.

The issue of confidentiality is also one that needs continued exploration and discussion. The entire area of ethics and accountability needs further review and working clarification. With the increasing complexity of our technological revolution, it is increasingly more difficult for counselors to know their appropriate role and the legal parameters of the counselor functions.

There is little doubt that counselors must be more accountable to the public. Physicians, for example, are finding themselves in legal situations that didn't exist a generation ago. In the future, we will see counselors caught in similar situations. Parents and students in various parts of the country have already sued school systems. Counselors need help in this area. Even the question of what information should be included in a case record needs careful consideration.

Studies on ethical issues are one giant step toward helping us grapple with the issues. We need more working guidelines in an area which is rapidly changing. We need more basic facts in relation to the issues before we can proceed with some assurance that we are protecting both the public and our own profession.

17. The judicial use of paraprofessionals allowing counselors more time for professional responsibilities.

In some school systems, paraprofessionals have been detailed as teacher aides. When paraprofessionals have been assigned as counselor aides, counselors too often view it as an attempt to use them as counselors for budget saving purposes. This should not be the case. Rather than using counselor aides to replace counselors, they should be utilized to supplement and complement them. Too many high school counselors are reporting that up to 70% of their time is spent on supervisory and clerical activities. Paraprofessional counselors need to maximize their skills and talent in a more productive manner. Paraprofessionals in counseling are here to stay. Counselors who are flexible can help determine their role, status and functions so that their own skills can be best utilized.

In order to effectively provide opportunities for paraprofessionals, counselors will need more in-depth expertise, skill and knowledge. Unless there is discernible difference between the effectiveness of counselors and counselor aides, counselors will ultimately be phased out.

18. Greater active involvement in social action, legislation and community activities by counselors.

Counselors need competencies in the area of social action and legislation. During the past year more vocational guidance counselors than ever before were involved in testimony at the local, state and federal level. For the first time, counselors are consulted about legislation pertaining to education and guidance prior to introduction to the legislature and passage. Some counselors have successfully campaigned for public office. Counselors' responsibilities as agents of change and their commitment as policy movers are far greater than ever. Counselor involvement with the power structure of legislatures is imperative if counseling is to survive as a separate profession and effect change in local communities.

Increased social participation by professional personnel in counseling dramatically exhibits their importance as living models. "What you do speaks so loudly that I can't hear what you say." Values may often be the hidden agenda. Most counselors can no longer be neutral in the counseling interview of life itself. It is good to see counselor educators running for political office—breaking into the power structure so that they can effect important social and legislative action. Counselors must take a stand on important issues of the day.

The new subway being built in Washington, D.C. will cost millions of dollars, yet no funds were allotted to provide facilities for severely handicapped individuals to use the subway until the National Paraplegia Foundation fought the battle alone. The need has been verified, but dollars are still lacking. Where were the American Personnel and Guidance Association, National Capitol Personnel and Guidance

Association, or individual counselors when their support was needed. This is one example within counseling where counselors could have taken constructive action. There are too many counselors caught up in their own bailiwick without awareness of the gestalt.

Most counselors and the associations representing us do not take firm stands on current issues important to counseling. A few illustrations include: drugs, affirmative action on reverse discrimination, the aging, Women's Liberation, revenue sharing, Watergate. Many more could be listed.

The time has come for counselors to be much more aggressive in community activities. Together, counselors and the community must take stock of the critical issues. In this regard, we must become more sophisticated in weighing the consequences of legislation affecting our clients and profession. We need to work more closely with legislators at the local, state and national levels. Counselors can no longer claim neutrality. It is essential that we take action.

AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND GUIDANCE ASSOCIATION

The APGA has approximately 33,000 members in counseling and guidance professions, with ten affiliated member organizations:

National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA)
The American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
The Student Personnel Association for Teacher Education (SPATE)
The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)
The American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
The American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA)
The Association for Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance (AMEG)
The National Employment Counselor Association (NEGA)
The Association for Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance (ANWC)
The National Catholic Guidance Counselors Association—a recent affiliation

The International Association of Counseling Services (IACS) is an independent board created by APGA. Criteria for approval of counseling agencies are constantly undergoing change. Every two years, IACS publishes a directory of those agencies that are approved. Not all qualifying agencies have seen fit to be evaluated by the Association. As time goes on, fewer agencies and counselors in private practice will be able to present a favorable professional image without being assessed by their own professional group or peers. Accreditation now encompasses diverse activities such as prison work and home study courses.

If a professional association is to represent an entire profession, it has an obligation to those it serves—its members and the public—to see that personnel operates at the highest possible professional level. It should not be self-serving, but aimed toward the public good. Much of the direction taken by the counseling profession will reflect the strength of its professional acumen, and the responsibility and dedication of its members, in particular, its leadership.

Some current functions of APGA, not in order of priority, include:

- Conventions and community meetings on varied topics of professional concern.
- Professional journals.
- Newsletters.
- Referral and placement service.
- Ethical practices guidelines.
- Legislative activities at both professional and social levels.
- Insurance covering a wide variety of areas.
- Workshops and field seminars.

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- Preparation of audio-visual materials.
- Evaluation of professional publications.
- Professional growth and development–including the relevance and nature of training and education for counselors in a wide variety of work settings.
- Salary and personnel practices information.
- Assistance with professional problems.
- Federal relations and legislative activities.
- Maintaining understanding and support of the public.
- Certification of counseling agencies and counselors.
- Dissemination of professional research.
- Liaison with other professional groups.
- Publication of books and monographs for the general public including topics such as career education, directions for women and other minority groups.
- Minority recruitment and participation in the profession.
- Human relations and civil rights.

There is little doubt that the American Personnel and Guidance Association must do more for its membership. A study conducted by APGA to see what the dominant issues were was carried out in the GUIDEPOSTS. Only 300 APGA members saw fit to answer. This in itself is important. A concommitant issue is the effect of multiple professional counseling organizations on the profession's growth. APGA performs a wide variety of functions. However, many of its members are asking, "Are these the priorities that a professional counseling association should give to its members?" "Should APGA be more like the National Education Association or American Psychological Association?" As so many others in the U.S., counselors are concerned about the entire field of consumerism and on-the-job benefits. Why have certain divisions such as ASCA and currently ACPA tried to withdraw? This is but one important parameter. What should be the role of APGA?

- Should APGA take the lead in establishing quality education and training for counselors?
- Should APGA provide leadership for updating knowledge, skills and counselor needs on the job?
- Should APGA act primarily as a union or a professional society? Can it function as both?
- Should APGA act as a self-regulating body for the profession?
- Should APGA take the initiative in developing new roles to meet societal needs or should it just react to legislative mandates?
- What are APGA short-term and long-term objectives?

I am certain that you can name many others.

As presently constituted, does APGA meet the burning issues currently facing the counseling profession? Does APGA serve you, as an individual counselor, and the profession collectively? Do you feel committed to the counseling profession? Are you equally committed to APGA? If not, why?

Included with this issue of *Counselor's Information Service* is a questionnaire entitled "Issues in Counseling." It will be greatly appreciated if the reader would complete this form and return it to the address noted at the bottom of the sheet.

Reader reactions and comments are welcomed.